Illegal Drug Use
in Orthodox Jewish Adolescents

Joshua Fogel, PhD

ABSTRACT. Orthodox Jewish adolescents are increasingly seeking stimulation with illegal drugs. Eleven Orthodox Jewish adolescents were surveyed with semi-structured interviews on the Orthodox Jewish cultural aspects of their illegal drug use. Adolescents had mixed beliefs about religious teachings affecting their illegal drug use. No consistent pattern existed for particular ethnic aspects of Orthodox Jewish religious practice as a risk factor for illegal drug use. Language used to describe illegal drug use in this population is described. Unlike illegal drug use in secular and non-Jewish adolescents, these adolescents reported very little family discord or poor relationships with their parents.

KEYWORDS. Illegal drug use, substance use, Orthodox Jews, adolescents, ethnicity, culture

INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are susceptible to various addictive illegal drugs and this is occurring even in more traditional ethnic groups. In varying rates, adolescents choose to use alcohol, cigarettes and/or various illegal drugs.
One popular model conceptualizes illegal drug use as a series of stages consisting of (1) no use of any illegal drugs, (2) use of beer or wine, (3) use of cigarettes, (4) use of marijuana, and (5) use of other illegal drugs such as heroin and cocaine (Cattarello, Clayton, & Leukefeld, 1995). Not everyone goes through all these stages but those who make it to the later stages often have progressed in a stepwise manner through these stages. Movement to the later and more serious stages often depends upon the extensiveness and intensiveness of illegal drug use. The more one is extensively and intensively involved at one stage, the greater the probability for this individual to progress to the next stage. As one progresses through these stages, one often adds to the previous stage and does not eliminate the previous learned behavior(s) (Cattarello et al., 1995).

Orthodox Jews have very conservative practices and for many years were unaffected by the secular cultural milieu of which they were surrounded and lived in the United States. Increasingly, some Orthodox Jewish adolescents are beginning to use illegal drugs (Blumenthal & Russell, 1999; Danis, 1999).

To the author’s knowledge, besides popular press articles, this is the first scientific study of Orthodox Jewish adolescents using illegal drugs. The databases of Medline, PsycInfo, CINAHL, and Sociological Abstracts were searched from January 1990 through December 2002 with the search terms of either ‘Orthodox Jew,’ ‘Jew,’ or ‘Jewish’ together with the terms ‘substance’ and/or ‘drug.’ No relevant articles were found. In this study, qualitative research using semi-structured interviews was conducted with 11 male Orthodox Jewish adolescents to study their experiences with illegal drug use.

**METHOD**

**Participants**

Eleven Orthodox Jewish male adolescents were interviewed at their social club in a large metropolitan area in the northeast area of the United States. Membership is free and the criteria for eligibility is as one member described, that ‘we are at-risk Orthodox Jewish male adolescents.’ The sample is not an epidemiological sample and may not truly represent all Orthodox Jewish male adolescents. It is a convenience sampling of those who were members of this social club. Of the 13 individuals approached, 11 agreed to be interviewed (84.6%).
All of those who attended this social club at one time had fully practiced Orthodox Judaism. In this sample, 10 of the 11 adolescents reported coming from homes where their parents were ‘Shomer Shabbos’ (a Hebrew term for being Sabbath observant). Being Shomer Shabbos is often used as the most defining characteristic of true practice of Orthodox Judaism. Some of these adolescents based on their current appearance may not appear Orthodox Jewish, as for example they did not regularly wear a ‘yarmulka’ (skullcap worn by Orthodox Jewish males) on their head, nor were they all Shomer Shabbos. However, these adolescents even if not currently 100% practitioners of Orthodox Judaism strongly identified with Orthodox Judaism. They chose to attend this Orthodox Jewish social club and not a secular Jewish or other non-Jewish social club.

These Orthodox Jewish male adolescents differed from the norm in that they were at-risk Orthodox Jewish male adolescents. At-risk behaviors as perceived by the Orthodox Jewish community include aggression, property destruction, vandalism, theft, substance abuse, addiction and dealing drugs, promiscuous sexual activity, running away from home, truancy, suicidal ideation, and public disregard for societal and communal rules and norms (Danziger & Blass, 2001).

Concerned Orthodox Jewish community members established this social club as a place for these adolescents to socialize. This social club offers adolescents the opportunity to relax, watch sports on television, bodybuild in the gym, and play various games. Alcohol, cigarette, and illegal drug use are prohibited on the premises. Counselors are on premises and are available to talk with these adolescents.

Among Orthodox Jews, whether they are parents, teachers, or Rabbis, illegal drug use is viewed as deviant behavior, sinful, and is strongly frowned upon. For example, one of the greatest Rabbis of the 20th century in the United States, Rabbi Feinstein, published a religious prohibition on marijuana use (Feinstein, 1982). His five reasons for prohibition are: (1) it is harmful to the body, (2) it affects mental concentration, (3) it promotes extreme desire, (4) it violates the Biblical concept of “thou shall be holy,” and (5) it causes one to violate other prohibitions. Also, alcohol use is not prohibited by Jewish law. Traditionally, Orthodox Jews are not as heavy users of alcohol as compared to the secular North American population.

**Procedures**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted (Bernard, 2002). Participants were asked if they could be interviewed about adolescent attitudes toward illegal drug use. The interview began with a general question of “What experiences led you or your friends to consider using illegal
As the goal of this study was to determine the religious, ethnic (i.e., the sense of belonging to the Orthodox Jewish ethnic group and its subgroups), and language aspects of Orthodox Jewish adolescents using illegal drugs, participants were asked specific questions on these aspects topics. Religious, ethnic, and language aspects were chosen, as these typically constitute the culture of a particular group.

Religious questions included: (1) Do you believe in God?, (2) Does religion play a role in your life?, and (3) Do you feel that Rabbis/‘yeshiva’ (Jewish religious school)/religion influences you? Ethnic questions included: (1) What type of ethnic background is your family (i.e., non-religious, ‘Modern Orthodox’ (more liberal practice of Orthodox Judaism), ‘Yeshivish’ (more strict practice of Orthodox Judaism), ‘Hasidic’ (more strict practice of Orthodox Judaism, along with very distinctive dress), ‘middle of the road’ (practice in between modern Orthodox and Yeshivish)?, (2) How does your family view your lifestyle? Language questions included: (1) What is the native language spoken at home?, (2) How do you identify with that language in your daily life?, and (3) Do the people who sell you or your friends drugs speak your native language?

No standardized measures were used (i.e., Addiction Severity Index). Demographic questions were asked about age, education level, number of siblings in the family, parental marital status, parental religious status, participant religious status, and participant current illegal drug use status. Duration and dosage of illegal drug use were not asked so as not to antagonize the participants.

RESULTS

Demographics

Table 1 describes the characteristics of the 11 participants. Below is a summary of Table 1. Age was (Mean = 16.7, SD = 0.9), the number of high schools attended was (Mean = 3.1, SD = 1.9), and the number of children in the family was (Mean = 6.1, SD = 2.9). Parental marital status was comprised of 81.8% (n = 9) with no reported marital difficulty and 18.2% (n = 2) with marital difficulty (one divorced and the other near divorce). Parent religious status was comprised of 90.9% (n = 10) currently Shomer Shabbos and 9.1% (n = 1) not Shomer Shabbos. Adolescent religious status was comprised of 54.5% (n = 6) currently Shomer Shabbos and 45.5% (n = 5) not Shomer Shabbos. Previously, use of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th># High Schools Attended</th>
<th># Children in family</th>
<th>Parental Marital Status</th>
<th>Parental Religious Status</th>
<th>Participant Religious Status</th>
<th>Ever Used Illegal Drugs</th>
<th>Currently Using Illegal Drugs</th>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Shomer Shabbos</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Studying for GED</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Near Divorce</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>1 (but expelled 5 times)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Shomer Shabbos</td>
<td>Shomer Shabbos</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Not in school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Shomer Shabbos</td>
<td>Shomer Shabbos</td>
<td>No</td>
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Note: Shomer Shabbos: A Hebrew term for being Sabbath observant.
All students only attended religious Jewish schools.
illegal drugs was 81.8% (n = 9) with non-use of 18.2% (n = 2). Current use of illegal drugs was 18.2% (n = 2) with non-use of 81.8% (n = 9).

Religion

Fictitious names are used in the narratives below to protect the privacy of the participants.

All of the Orthodox Jewish adolescents believed in God. Adolescents had mixed feelings regarding the influence of the Orthodox Jewish religion on their illegal drug use. Some felt quite strongly that it influenced/caused their illegal drug use while others felt that it helped them stop their illegal drug use, while others felt that religion was uninvolved with their illegal drug use. Two narratives representative of these differing beliefs are written below.

Religion Influencing/Causing Illegal Drug Use

Chaim is an 18 year old from a Shomer Shabbos home and he is currently Shomer Shabbos. His parents are married and there are five children in his family. He had attended two Yeshiva high schools and was asked to leave the second high school six weeks before graduation. He came from a ‘black hat’ (dress symbol of those fervently Orthodox Jewish) environment and felt that he was an outcast in that community. He became friends with a similar group of individuals who also felt rejected from the ‘black hat’ Orthodox Jewish community. He began using illegal drugs due to peer pressure from these friends. To be part of this group, he began using illegal drugs, as did everyone else who was part of this group. He initially believed that he would use illegal drugs ‘once in a while.’ However, as he became more involved with illegal drug use, he found it more difficult to stop. His infrequent use progressed from use every other weekend to every weekend, to extended weekends, and finally to daily use. He used ‘hard’ illegal drugs such as cocaine and mushrooms. The response of his family was to force him to consult with ‘black hat’ Orthodox Jewish Rabbis. He disliked the Rabbi’s approach and felt uncomfortable around them and it only made him more resistant about stopping to use illegal drugs. Peer pressure helped him stop using illegal drugs as he found a different set of friends who helped him stay clean. He also was looking for a girlfriend and the girls that he was interested in disliked people who used illegal drugs. He also stopped using
illegal drugs because he believed that it negatively affected his appearance.

**Religion Helping Stop Illegal Drug Use**

Moishe is a 16 year old from a Shomer Shabbos home and he is currently not Shomer Shabbos. His parents are married and there are 7 children in his family. He has attended three different Yeshiva high schools and is still in Yeshiva high school. He was influenced by his friends to use illegal drugs and had used marijuana for one year. He believed that religious approaches were supportive in his attempts to stop illegal drug use. Due to the strong community ties in the Orthodox Jewish community, Orthodox Jewish people who would find out about his illegal drug use would inform his parents who would become very distressed about his use. This constantly kept up the pressure on him to stop using illegal drugs. Also, his aunt and uncle who were Orthodox Jewish and whom he respected a lot would not accept his illegal drug use. They persuaded him to see an Orthodox Jewish Rabbi. This Rabbi was influential in his stopping to use illegal drugs. The Rabbi convinced him that he would regret using illegal drugs since it could ‘mess up his brain’ and that this habit would have harmful future ramifications. The Rabbi helped him gain confidence in his ability to have a drug free future life.

**Ethnic**

Adolescents had mixed feelings regarding the influence of the type of Orthodox Jewish ethnic background on illegal drug use. Some believed that those from Modern Orthodox homes were more likely to use illegal drugs while others believed that those from Yeshivish/Hasidic homes (i.e., black hat) were more likely to use illegal drugs. Two narratives representative of these differing beliefs are written below.

**Modern Orthodox**

Yanky is a 17 year old from a Modern Orthodox non-Shomer Shabbos home and he is currently Shomer Shabbos. His parents are divorced and there are 5 children in his family. He had attended six Yeshiva high schools and had graduated from Yeshiva high school. He believed that illegal drug use could happen to anyone—even prominent Rabbi’s sons. He stated that illegal drug use is more likely to occur in those from divorced families. Also, he stated that those who came from ‘Modern Or-
thodox' families were more susceptible to illegal drug use. His rationale was that they have more access to television and movies, leisure activities often not done in more traditional or black hat Orthodox Jewish families. He felt that the popular media reinforces and validates an illegal drug use lifestyle.

Yeshivish/Hasidic

Zelig is a 18 year old from a Yeshivish Shomer Shabbos home and he is currently Shomer Shabbos. His parents are married and there are 6 children in his family. He had attended one Yeshiva high school and had been expelled five times. He currently is attending that Yeshiva high school. Zelig never used illegal drugs although many of his friends used illegal drugs. He believed that the Yeshivish/Hasidic try illegal drugs more often due to living very sheltered lives. They need to seek some stimulation in their very routine lives. As he stated, “the more ‘frum’ (religious) you are, the more you need to break out.”

Language

Adolescents reported coming from homes where English was the predominant language. They reported different words used to describe Orthodox Jewish adolescents using illegal drugs. Some were more secular terms while others were Yiddish or Hebrew words. The secular words used were ‘illegal drug addict,’ ‘crack head,’ ‘asshole,’ ‘pothead,’ ‘bum,’ ‘druggie,’ and ‘loser.’ Some girls would call them an ‘eehee’ (unknown term). However, many reported that family members were careful not to use these negative names in referring to them. Some reported family threats of ‘you won’t get married’ and ‘don’t speak to me.’

A Jewish ethnic (Yiddish/Hebrew) word used was ‘shaygetz’ (non-Jew). Another term used among Orthodox Jewish adolescents when describing illegal drug use was to say that you wanted to ‘schmif’ (unknown if it is a Yiddish/Hebrew term).

DISCUSSION

Current Crisis

In the past few years, a number of popular press articles discuss illegal drug use among Orthodox Jewish adolescents. Two issues of the
Jewish Observer magazine (1999, 2000) were dedicated to this topic. Part of a conference had programming addressing this issue (Blumenthal & Russell, 1999). This is the first scientific study to study illegal drug use in Orthodox Jewish adolescents.

**Religion**

In this study there was a mixed pattern relating Jewish religious practice to illegal drug use. Some Orthodox Jewish adolescents found religiosity to cause or influence their illegal drug use while others found it helpful for stopping their illegal drug use. In the literature on religiosity and illegal drug use there is a consistent pattern across countries and of different religious or ethnic groups that greater levels of religiosity is associated with lower levels of illegal drug use (Booth & Martin, 1998; Gorsuch, 1995; Karlsen, Rogers, & McCarthy, 1998; Miller, Davies, & Greenwald, 2000).

For example, in the United States, results from adolescents participating in the National Comorbidity Survey showed that those with higher levels of belief in a personal relationship with the Divine or who had fundamental religious affiliation had lower levels of illegal drug use. However, there was no association with illegal drug use for those who had a personal commitment to teaching and living according to religious rules (Miller et al., 2000). In the United Kingdom, Bangladeshi adolescents with low peer, high religious, and high family involvement had low levels of illegal drug use while whites with high peer, low religious, and low family involvement had high levels of illegal drug use (Karlsen et al., 1998).

Although the key aspects of illegal drug use prevention include the religious practices and beliefs, there is a social aspect in that religious groups provide for association with peers who do not use illegal drugs (Booth & Martin, 1998).

However, for a number of the Orthodox Jewish adolescents, religion was a factor in causing or influencing their illegal drug use, which is contrary to the typical approach of religion being a protective factor for illegal drug use. Although not studied among illegal drug users, there are a number of studies that show religion can influence some individuals to have higher levels of alcohol use through a “paradoxical pattern” (Booth & Martin, 1998). These approaches suggest that some individuals believe that religion is punishing and restrictive and causes them to adversely react to religion and use greater levels of alcohol. This has been shown to be true for Jewish men and for Protestants but not...
Mormons. A similar theory again exists for alcohol use that is called ‘psychological reactance theory’ (Allen, Sprenkel, & Vitale, 1994). Although not studied for illegal drug use, it may be that these Orthodox Jewish adolescent illegal drug users are negatively reacting to their Orthodox Jewish religious faith and are using illegal drugs similar to the Jewish men and Protestants.

Ethnic

Jewish ethnicity is an ethnic group not based upon skin color, which is different from other ethnic groups characterized by skin color (e.g., Hispanic Americans, African Americans). Jewish ethnicity involves religious, social, and cultural practices. In a study of Jewish adolescents coping with ethnic stress, higher levels of Jewish ethnic identity were related to coping strategies oriented toward God’s direction and support, and also toward seeking Jewish cultural and social support (Dubow, Pargament, Boxer, & Tarakeshwar, 2000). Similarly, among African Americans, ethnic identity is a protective factor for illegal drug use. It is not a main effect but rather through a mediation effect where ethnic identity enhances protective factors from ecological, family, personality, and peer domains and lowers the level of drug use (J. S. Brook, Balka, D. W. Brook, Win, & Gursen, 1998).

In this study, there were mixed results regarding which type of Orthodox Jewish ethnicity was protective from illegal drug use. Some adolescents believed that being Modern Orthodox was a risk factor for illegal drug use while others believed that being Yeshivish/Hasidic was a risk factor for illegal drug use.

Language

In this study, the terms used by others to describe these Orthodox Jewish adolescent illegal drug users included “illegal drug addict, crack head, asshole, pothead, bum, druggie, and loser.” Also, the Yiddish term of ‘shaygetz’ (non-Jew) strongly suggests that members of the Orthodox Jewish community view illegal drug use as a non-Jewish problem. These terms show the strong distaste and stigma associated with using illegal drugs in the Orthodox Jewish community. This stigma may prevent Orthodox Jewish adolescents from telling their parents or other close family members about their illegal drug use until it becomes very addictive and then more difficult to stop using illegal drugs.
Theories of Illegal Drug Use

Some of the literature on theories of illegal drug use may help explain the illegal drug use seen among Orthodox Jewish adolescents. Four theories exist to help understand adolescent illegal drug use (Schinke, Cole, Diaz, & Botvin, 1997): (1) Social learning theory suggests that people learn to behave through a process of modeling and reinforcement. Youths’ beliefs that illegal drug use is standard practice among their peers can cause them to believe that illegal drug use is socially acceptable; (2) Problem behavior theory suggests that adolescents engage in deviant acts such as illegal drug use because these acts help them achieve personal goals; (3) Peer cluster theory assumes that peer interactions largely determine risk-taking behavior such as illegal drug use; (4) Family network theory suggests that the absence of family leads to illegal drug use.

Family Relationships

In this study, all the above theories were relevant to Orthodox Jewish adolescents. Family network theory may not be as relevant for the average Orthodox Jewish adolescent since as shown in Table 1, almost all the adolescents came from intact families. Although family presence is an important part of the developmental history of these adolescents, it may be that in those cases where adolescents come from divorced homes, this may be a risk factor for illegal drug use. This was illustrated in the summary of Yanky.

The empirical literature regarding adolescent illegal drug use suggests various risk and protective factors. Family relationships are a crucial risk factor for adolescent illegal drug use (Thomas & Schandler, 1996). These adolescents consistently did not emphasize having poor family relationships. One can assume that for this population, this was not as applicable. Also, those from authoritarian or authoritative families have lower illegal drug use than those from neglectful and indulgent families (Adalbjarnardottir & Hafsteinsson, 2001). Although not studied, it may be possible that these Orthodox Jewish adolescents came from neglectful and indulgent families, which may have led to their illegal drug use.

Illegal Drug Use Risk and Protective Factors

Overall the various risk factors generally associated with adolescent illegal drug use include: male gender, association with illegal drug-us-
ing peers, low academic achievement, frequent absence from school, weak commitment to school, low educational aspirations, unconventional beliefs and attitudes, perception of lacking parental love, low attachment to parents, low parental supervision, inconsistent family management practices, parental use of alcohol or illegal drugs, low commitment to religion, sensation seeking, high behavioral activity level, depression or emotional distress, and residing in a socially disorganized neighborhood (Cattarello et al., 1995; Clark & Neighbors, 1996).

Protective factors for adolescent illegal drug use include: female gender, high socioeconomic status, high academic achievement, strong commitment to school, high educational aspirations, high intelligence, close affective relationships with parents and family members, absence of parental problems with alcohol or illegal drugs, high religiosity, close supportive relationships with peers and others outside the family, high self-esteem and self-efficacy, resiliency, creativity, and temperamental considerations such as high sociability (Cattarello et al., 1995; Harachi, Ayers, Hawkins, Catalano, & Cushing, 1996).

In this sample of Orthodox Jewish adolescents, the above risk and protective factors were present with the exclusion of the family related risk factors. It is possible that these adolescents minimized poor family relationships. However, the overall impression obtained from these interviews, were that they came from families where no overt alcohol or illegal drug use existed. Their parents used appropriate parenting techniques in raising their children. It is possible that the interviews did not extensively probe these adolescents or that they did not feel comfortable sharing the truth with the interviewer.

**Cigarette Smoking**

The empirical literature consistently shows that a person who has not started smoking as an adolescent is unlikely to ever become a smoker. Adolescents are aware of the dangers associated with smoking and nicotine addiction but feel that it does not apply to them (Kessler, 1995). Almost every Orthodox Jewish adolescent surveyed smoked cigarettes. Consistent with the empirical literature, these adolescents felt that they would be able to stop smoking if they chose to stop. As smoking is a risk factor for illegal drug use (Cattarello et al., 1995), these adolescents who did not use illegal drugs are possibly at risk for future illegal drug use.
Alcohol Use

Interestingly enough, these adolescents minimized or did not focus on alcohol use. Some of the risk factors for adolescent alcohol use are positive beliefs about alcohol’s effects, parental behavior and drinking patterns, and peer drinking habits (Chassin & DeLucia, 1996). A few of the adolescents discussed alcohol use while most stated that they did not currently nor in the past have alcohol problems. Perhaps they truly did not have an alcohol problem, or perhaps alcohol is an illegal substance that is socially acceptable to use in Orthodox Jewish environments. For example, many use alcoholic beverages for ‘kiddush’ (special prayer made at the Sabbath table) rituals twice on weekends. Alcohol such as wine or whiskey is often placed on the table at family meals on the Sabbath. Also, another possibility that is consistent with previous reports of adolescent illegal drug users (O’Connell, 1991), is that some of these Orthodox adolescents appear to have traits of conduct disorder, a risk factor for illegal drug use and other maladaptive behaviors.

CONCLUSION

My impression was that most of the Orthodox Jewish adolescents were open and honest with me because they were introduced to me by one of their peers. They emphasized their beliefs and feelings regarding religion and their illegal drug use. They believed that Rabbis should be more attuned and sensitive to their students. They were willing to be mentored by those who came to them on less threatening terms (i.e., Rabbis who came to the social club). Of those who felt that religious beliefs helped them stop their illegal drug use, psychological interviewing and possibly psychological testing could determine the personality traits and characteristics that could detect those who would most benefit from religious counseling. A topic not mentioned was the presence of ‘baal teshuvah’ (secular/non-Orthodox Jew who became an Orthodox Jew) parents.

This current research suggests future research topics including: (1) more detailed inquiry about the Orthodox Jewish adolescent’s personal family relationship, as when asked, almost all indicated that they came from functional families and had appropriate relationships with their families; (2) what are the predictors for those Orthodox Jewish adolescents who find religion helpful for stopping illegal drug use?; (3) what causes some Orthodox Jewish adolescents to adversely react to reli-
gion and thereby use illegal drugs?; and (4) what are the predictors for different types of Orthodox Jewish adolescent ethnic background and its relationship to illegal drug use? Also, future research using larger sample sizes and longitudinal qualitative and quantitative methods can perhaps unravel the mystery of why even some of the finest Orthodox Jewish families are plagued by adolescent illegal drug use.

REFERENCES


Joshua Fogel


SUBMITTED: 01/14/04
ACCEPTED: 04/03/04

APPENDIX 1. Glossary of Hebrew/Yiddish Terms

Baal teshuvah: A Hebrew term loosely translated as a secular/non-Orthodox Jew who became an Orthodox Jew.
Black hat: Orthodox Jewish males who wear a black fedora on their heads when in public places and/or for prayer. This is a symbol of their fervent Orthodox Jewish beliefs. This includes those from Yeshivish and Hasidic backgrounds.
Eehee: Unknown term, not used in either Hebrew or Yiddish
Frum: A Yiddish term that means religious.
Hasidic: A group of Orthodox Jews that are often recognized by their distinct black clothing and side curls.
Kiddush: Hebrew term for the special prayer made at the Sabbath table.
Middle of the road: Orthodox Jewish practice in between modern Orthodox and Yeshivish.
Modern Orthodox: more liberal practice of Orthodox Judaism.
Rabbi: A male who is an Orthodox Jewish religious leader.
Shomer Shabbos: A Hebrew term for being Sabbath observant.
Schmif: Unknown term, not used in either Hebrew or Yiddish
Shaygetz: Yiddish term for a non-Jew
Yarmulka: Skullcap worn by Orthodox Jewish males.
Yeshiva: Jewish religious school
Yeshivish: More strict practice of Orthodox Judaism.
Yiddishkeit: A Yiddish term meaning the practice of Judaism.